



*Rhayader
Rural District Council*

*Annual Report
of the
Medical Officer
of Health*

For the Year 1958

Members of the Council

Year 1958

Chairman : Alderman E. T. K. MORGAN, J.P.

Vice-Chairman : R. P. L. HUGHES, C.C.

Councillors :

D. H. Bound	T. J. Owen, retired April, 1958
O. P. Davies	Lt.Col. J. L. Philips, D.S.O., J.P.
R. E. P. Jones	A. H. Price
R. T. Knill, elected July, 1958	C. H. Price, retired May, 1958
I. J. Lewis	J. C. Price, retired April, 1958
Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E. elected May, 1958	J. T. L. Price
V. Lewis, elected May, 1958	W. A. Probert
S. E. Lloyd	I. Thomas, elected July, 1958
J. F. Mills, died April, 1958	A. Thompson
G. D. Morgan	F. G. White, elected May, 1958
A. E. Oakley	J. D. Williams, ret. April, 1958

Committees

Public Health and Housing—All members of the Council

Chairman : Councillor O. P. Davies

Finance—All members of the Council

Chairman : Councillor Maj. Gen. R. S. Lewis, C.B., O.B.E.

Medical Officer of Health :

J. D. O'M. POOLE, M.B., Ch.B.—died March, 1959

J. DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch.—appointed October, 1959

Bryncoed, Rhayader. Tel. No. Rhayader 31

(General Practitioner and part-time M.O.H.)

Public Health Inspector :

G. H. ROBERTS, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I.

(Cert.—S.I.E.J.B., and Meat and other Foods of R.S.H.)

BRYNCOED,
RHAYADER,
RADNOR.

Tel. Rhayader 31

30th November, 1959

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF RHAYADER

Sirs,

The delay in presentation of this report was made inevitable by the tragic death of Dr. J. D. O.'M. Poole, the late Medical Officer of Health, in March, 1959.

I now have pleasure in submitting for your consideration the Annual Report on the health and health services in the Rhayader Rural District for the year 1958.

This report is prepared in accordance with the instructions issued by the Welsh Board of Health.

I am indebted to the Public Health Inspector and staff of the Council for their help in the preparation of this report.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DAVIES, M.B., B.Ch.
Medical Officer of Health

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of District	...	...	...	...	91,240 acres
Estimated Population (mid 1958)	...	...	...	...	4,190
Number of Inhabited Houses :—					
In Parishes					
Abbeycwmhir	...	...	...	68	
Cefnlllys Rural	...	...	...	24	
Llanbadarnfawr	...	...	...	148	
Llanfihangel Helygen	...	...	...	14	
Llansantffraed Cwmdeuddwr	...	...	...	165	
Llanyre	...	...	...	197	
Nantmel...	...	...	...	203	
Rhayader	...	...	...	336	
St. Harmon	...	...	...	134	
				— —	
					Total 1,289
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	£85,753
Product of a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£353

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Rhayader's density of population is extremely low at one person per 21 acres. There has been a further fall in the estimated population; this follows the general trend of de-population of the rural areas. It is also reflected in the wastage of the remoter uneconomical cottages and in spite of the Council's rebuilding programme there are now only 26 more inhabited houses than there were in 1938.

1958 was characterised by a very fine dry spring and a long dreary succession of wet days that passed for summer. The average rainfall, however, was only 6% above average.

The average rainfall for the British Isles is about 30 inches. Our rainfall for the past few years has been :—

Year	Total Rainfall	Percentage of Long Average
1954	59.23	123
1955	43.02	90
1956	44.38	92
1957	51.62	107
1958	51.26	106

HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

The district is served by one part-time Medical Officer of Health, a Surveyor and a Public Health Inspector. A Rodent Operator is shared with Knighton Rural District Council.

Bacteriological analyses of milk, water and ice cream are undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory Service, Aberystwyth, whilst chemical analyses are done by the Public Analyst, Carmarthen.

Welfare Clinics are held monthly.

There are hospital outpatient facilities at Llandrindod Wells, Llanidloes, Hereford, Aberystwyth, Shrewsbury and at other hospitals farther afield.

Nursing services are administered by the Radnor County Authority and there are six District Nurses providing for Midwifery, Health Visiting and Home Nursing.

Ambulance Services are provided by the local St. Johns Voluntary Service supplementing the County Authority.

VITAL STATISTICS

(Figures shown are corrected)

Live Births

Male —legitimate	27	illegitimate	0	—	27
Female—	„	27	„	3	— 30

Total 57

Rate per 1,000 population	...	17.25
„ for England & Wales (1958)	...	16.4

Still Births

1 male (legitimate)

Rate per 1,000 live and still births	...	17.2
„ for England & Wales (1958)	...	21.6

Total Live and Still Births ... 58

Infant Deaths

Under 1 year	...	1 female (leg.)	
Under 4 weeks	...	1 female (leg.)	
Infant mortality rate per 1,000	...	total	17.5
„	„	legitimate	17.5
		Illegitimate deaths	Nil
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 (Eng. & Wales)			22.5
Neo-natal mortality rate per 1,000	...		17.5
Illegitimate births as % of total births...	...		5.2%
Maternal Deaths	...		Nil

Birth Rate and Death Rate in Previous Years

(per 1,000 Population)

Year	Births	Deaths
1953	15.2	11.4
1954	15.9	11.2
1955	22.0	11.1
1956	16.5	14.5
1957	20.5	12.7
1958	17.3	10.7

Causes of Death

	Male	Female
Tuberculosis, respiratory ...	1	—
Malignant neoplasm, stomach ...	1	1
" " lung ...	—	1
" " other sites ...	1	2
Vascular lesions of nervous system ...	4	9
Coronary disease, angina ...	6	4
Other heart disease ...	7	4
Bronchitis ...	1	—
Nephritis and nephrosis ...	1	—
Hyperplasia of prostate ...	1	—
Congenital malformations... ..	—	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases ...	—	2
Motor vehicle accidents ...	1	—
All other accidents ...	1	—
Suicide ...	1	—
	<hr/> 26	<hr/> 24
Total ...	50	

Circulatory diseases continue to be the major cause of death. This can, perhaps, be related to the increase in longevity and the higher proportion of elderly people. These diseases accounted for 42% of our deaths as against a national average of 37.5%, whilst cancers accounted for 12% against a national figure of 18.2%.

Expectation of life remains at 69 - male, 74 for females. The proportion of persons over 65 has risen slightly. By comparison the expectation of life in 1841 was male 47 years, female 48 years.

Infectious Diseases

	No. of cases notified
Measles ...	53
Scarletina ...	4
Whooping Cough ...	8
Tuberculosis ...	1
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Total	66

Tuberculosis

Number of cases on Register :

	Female	Male
Pulmonary ...	5	8
Non-pulmonary	2	2

Total 17

New cases notified during the year—1 female pulmonary

Deaths—1 male pulmonary

Due to many factors, environmental and clinical, the incidence of Tuberculosis continues to fall and the picture has brightened considerably even over the past few years. In 1948, for example, five new cases were notified, there were three deaths and the number on the Register stood at 40.

Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Smallpox

Figures for immunisation against Diphtheria and Whooping Cough and for vaccinations against Smallpox are not available, but there is reason to believe that the numbers have remained much as in other years.

Over past years there have been few cases of Diphtheria and there is a tendency for complacency. It is perhaps well to note that in the country as a whole, in 1958, there were 80 cases notified, and of these 8 were fatal. In all of the cases notified the source of infection remained a mystery, and in no case was a carrier revealed in the family or other close contact of the patient. It is important that children should continue to be immunised and the figures of 25-30 per annum as in earlier years be increased.

Poliomyelitis

There were no cases notified during the year.

Public response to the appeal for immunisation against this disease was encouraging.

Because of the sewer outfall above the park and the possible link between sewage and Poliomyelitis, an approach was made to the Head Teachers of local schools asking them to discourage children from bathing in the pool at the Waun Capel Parc. This potential danger spot has now been eliminated by the new sewerage works.

National Assistance Act, 1948—Section 47

No action was necessary under this section, which provides for the removal to suitable premises of persons unable to look after themselves.

Blindness

No action was taken under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION

Visits with reference to :—

	Visits	Re-Visits	Total
Housing—			
Allocation of Council Houses ...	57	20	77
Improvement of farm houses ...	44	19	63
Unfit houses	11	48	59
Improvement grants	8	—	8
Rural housing survey	282	15	297
Rent Acts	8	5	13
Public Health Act—			
Drainage	32	44	76
Closet conversion grants	7	16	23
House defects	27	24	51
Offensive refuse	5	2	7
Nuisance from animals	2	—	2
Caravans	2	—	2
Infectious diseases	6	3	9
Water supplies—public	11	1	12
—farms	37	2	39
—other houses	24	5	29
Rats and mice	21	8	29
Other pests	7	2	9
Miscellaneous	25	—	25
Inspections under			
Factories Acts—power	5	—	5
—non power	1	—	1
Petroleum Regulations	9	7	16
Meat and other foods—			
Meat inspection	182	—	182
Cafes, hotels, etc.	24	8	32
Food shops	23	—	23
Bakehouses	6	—	6
Milk supplies... ..	67	13	80
	933	242	1,175

No. of complaints received	78
" " in which no action was taken	21
" " remedied by informal action	49
" " " " statutory action	1
" " not yet remedied	7

Housing

During the latter part of the year work was concentrated on carrying out a Rural Housing Survey and 300 houses were inspected. It is obvious that many of the older and poorer houses cannot be replaced by any programme of Council rehousing owing to their remoteness, and low rents, and these houses will undoubtedly decline and fall out of use as they become vacant.

The Clearance Area Scheme at Newbridge-on-Wye was confirmed in this period, and the seven families concerned rehoused on a new estate. Work commenced on demolition and clearance, though this had not been completed at the turn of the year.

Three farms were modernised under Hill Farming Schemes. Defects in houses were remedied in 15 cases as a result of informal action. 3 formal notices were served under the Public Health Act, whilst one house was closed as a result of formal action under the Housing Act.

Destruction of Rats and Mice

The rat population appears to have reached a state of equilibrium and in fact there were two more treatments this year, at 88, than 1957. The number of surveys made were 323, and of these 251 were of farms. In order to keep up interest in pest destruction it is hoped to visit every farm at least within two years.

This policy seems to be the right one and the bulk of farm treatments are now carried out by request, the farmer notifying the department as soon as he notices an infestation. This means that the number of major infestations has declined from 17 in 1956 to 4 in 1958. The severity of a major infestation can be gauged from the fact that in one case, 106 lbs. of bait were consumed in 4 days. The economics of keeping rats is obvious.

Other Pests

An unusual infestation occurred during this year. This was of large numbers of bees making individual burrows into a stone flagged path. Specimens were sent to the University of Wales and identified as a species of Miner Bee. As they are extremely loath to sting they were left undisturbed.

Meat Inspection

	Cattle other than Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
No. killed	39	5	1	677	68
No. inspected	39	5	1	677	68
Condemnations					
All diseases except T.B. and Cysticeri					
Whole carcasses	—	—	—	3	—
Part carcasses	16	5	—	165	3
Percentage affected	41%	100%	—	25%	4%
Tuberculosis only					
Whole carcasses	—	—	—	—	—
Part carcasses	—	—	—	—	3
Percentage affected	—	—	—	—	4%

There were no cases of Cysticercosis

The Council Controlled Slaughterhouse continues to be used by three local butchers. Figures for 1958 show a slight decline on those for 1957. For comparative purposes I have reduced the figures below into units of killings. 1954 is the last year of control when the slaughterhouse was then administered by the Ministry of Food.

1954	1,794 units
1957	1,259 „
1958	1,104 „

20 animals were brought in for emergency slaughter. The bulk of these were sheep suffering from “gid” or as a result of accidents. One cow was brought in suffering from cancer.

A very encouraging sign is the fall in the incidence of tuberculosis. This year only three pigs were found to have the disease. This was localised in the head and probably avian in origin.

Total weight of meat condemned was 864 lbs.

Milk Sampling

48 samples of milk were taken for Methylene Blue Test, no biological samples were taken.

A number of samples failed to satisfy the test, in every case this was followed up by a personal visit.

Ice Cream

There are no premises manufacturing ice-cream in the district, and all is sold in pre-packed wrappings. Six samples were taken during 1958, all were highly satisfactory.

Other Foods

The numbers and types of food premises in the district are

Grocers...	...	...	39
Butchers	...	...	5
Public Houses...	...	...	22
Bakehouses	...	...	4
Hotels	...	...	20
Cafe's, restaurants	...	...	6
School Canteens	...	...	11
			<hr/>
Total	...	...	107

There was a complaint from one food shop of weevils in a packet of cake mixture. This was referred to me by the Weights & Measures Department.

There are no registrations under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act.

No lectures were given on food hygiene, but literature and posters were distributed to food traders for display.

Offal, etc. from the slaughterhouse was sold to the local Hunt where it was used for feeding the hounds.

Water Supplies

All water undertakings are owed by the Council. There were no water shortages during the year.

A considerable part of the work is concerned with private supplies, mainly farms. The Ministry of Agriculture grants for water supplies have meant that many farms now have private supplies that would otherwise have been prohibitive in cost.

62 samples were taken of private supplies.

Refuse Collection

Collection is made as follows:—

Rhayader, Cwmduddwr and Elan Valley—twice weekly
Newbridge-on-Wye, Doldowlod, Llanyre, Crossgates,
Penybont and Nantmel—weekly.

St. Harmon, Pantydwr, Nantgwyn, Bwlchysarnau,
Abbeycwmhir and Llangurig Road—fortnightly.

Public Cemetery

The Council own a public cemetery. The entrance buildings include a mortuary, rest room and conveniences. The mortuary was designed so that autopsies may be performed.

There were 4 interments in the year.

Public Conveniences

The Council have public conveniences at Rhayader, Cwm-dauddwr and the Cemetery, whilst the Birmingham Corporation have three conveniences in the area of the lakes.

Sewerage

There are modern plants at Newbridge-on-Wye, Crossgates and Rhayader. The latter scheme came into operation during the year and fulfills a long felt need.

